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ABSTRACT

The Cinderella story resonates with its audience--500 versions of the tale have been told in Europe alone, and related stories are told in cultures all over the globe. In America too, the classic tale, re-envisioned in print and other media, continues to be popular. What changes does the Cinderella tale undergo when it is transported from one culture to another? This lesson plan for a unit on the Cinderella story intended for children in grades 3-5: cites subject areas, time required, and skills developed; provides an introduction; presents learning objectives; poses guiding questions; gives tips for teachers preparing to teach the lesson; suggests (and delineates) five classroom activities; offers suggestions for extending the lesson; lists Web resources; addresses standards alignment; and provides worksheets for plot and setting elements in Cinderella. (NKA)

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[EDsitement Lesson Plan].

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CS 511 993

Cinderella Folk Tales: Variations in Plot and Setting

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GRADES 3–5

Introduction

Perhaps it's because each of us feels like the poor, downtrodden sibling at times. But whatever the reason, something about the Cinderella story resonates with its audience. Five hundred versions of the tale have been found in Europe alone; related stories are told in cultures all over the globe. In America as well, the classic tale, re-envisioned in print and other media, continues to be popular. What changes does the Cinderella story undergo when it's transported from one culture to another? What remains the same? Why do we love the character of Cinderella so much more than her own stepmother does?

Note: This lesson may be taught either as a stand-alone lesson or as a prequel to the complementary EDSITEment lesson Cinderella Folk Tales: Variations in Character, which concentrates on variability of character among Cinderella tales.

Guiding Questions:

How do the plot and setting of Cinderella change as it is translated into a different culture? What literary elements of the Cinderella story are universal?

Learning Objectives

After completing the lessons in this plan, students will be able to:

- List essential plot characteristics of a Cinderella tale
- Provide examples of variations in plot and setting among Cinderella tales
- Write a narrative—a Cinderella variation—with a plot appropriate to the genre and an original setting

Preparing to Teach this Lesson

- Review the lesson plan. Locate and bookmark suggested materials and other useful websites. Download and print out documents you will use and duplicate copies as necessary for student viewing.
- Download the blackline masters for this lesson, available here as a PDF file. Print out and make an appropriate number of copies of any handouts you plan to use in class.
- Prepare as a handout—or for computer viewing—the illustration Cinderella Fitting the Slipper so as to obscure any mention of Cinderella. The image is available from Cinderella Bibliography, a link from the EDSITEment resource The History of Education and Childhood.
- The Cinderella story can be found in many countries and in many cultures. Students will see dramatic evidence of that in this lesson; however, rather than concentrating on cultural differences between the stories, this lesson concentrates on identifying commonalities and differences in plot. Help students understand the universal appeal of the Cinderella story.
- The reading level of each of the stories suggested throughout this lesson is about the same, with a standard fairy tale vocabulary and perhaps—depending on the country of origin—a few unique words

Image courtesy of The Cinderella Project,
Michael N. Salda, editor
The de Grummond Children's Literature Research Collection,
University of Southern Mississippi

Subject Areas

Art and Culture
Folklore

Foreign Language
Other

Literature and Language Arts
Fiction
World

Time Required

Two or three class periods, plus additional time as needed to compose a fairy tale

Skills

Creative writing
Literary analysis
Collaboration
Performance skills

Additional Data

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relating to that country (such as "Brahmin" in the Indian Cinderella). Check to see if the reading level is appropriate to your class.

- Some classes would benefit from hearing in advance the stories to be assigned in Activities 2, 3, and 4, below. Consider reading them aloud during your usual story time in the days before you begin this lesson. The central activity is analysis, so it's fine for students to hear the story ahead of time.
- Page lengths—based on downloading the story in a 12-point font—are provided as an aid to assigning stories; however, your length may vary based on such variables as formatting and font. One of the options offered for group assignment in Activity 4, below, is an illustrated version of Aschenputtel (German for Cinderella, from the Grimm Brothers, 7 pages), from 19th Century German Stories, a link from the EDSITEment-reviewed website Internet Public Library.
- The following background information on Cinderella tales comes from an essay by Mary Northrup entitled Multicultural Cinderella Stories, available on the website of the American Library Association, a link from the EDSITEment resource Internet Public Library.

> The story of Cinderella, perhaps the best-known fairy tale, is told or read to children of very young ages. But Cinderella is not just one story; more than 500 versions have been found—just in Europe! The tale's origins appear to date back to a Chinese story from the ninth century, "Yeh-Shen." Almost every culture seems to have its own version, and every storyteller his or her tale. Charles Perrault is believed to be the author, in the 1690s, of our "modern" 300-year-old Cinderella, the French Cendrillon.
>
> Famous children's writers and illustrators have interpreted Cinderella, including Arthur Rackham, Marcia Brown (her version won the Caldecott Medal in 1955), Nonny Hogrogian, Paul Galdone, and Amy Ehrlich. Most renderings of the story include an evil stepmother and stepsister(s), a dead mother, a dead or ineffective father, some sort of gathering such as a ball or festival, mutual attraction with a person of high status, a lost article, and a search that ends with success.
>
> Male Cinderellas do appear, and not just in parodies, such as Helen Ketteman's "Bubba the Cowboy Prince" and Sandi Takayama's "Sumorella" ... "Billy Beg" of Ireland is just one of many of these versions of the story.
>
> Cinderella, despite her popularity, has developed a reputation as a simpering, whimpering girl who is helpless until the right magic comes along. But this is the Cinderella of the later twentieth century. The earlier Cinderella, in many of her original forms, was not a wishing-only kind of person. She was self-reliant, devoted to family and ancestors, and willing to make her own future.

- Experts categorize fairy tales according to a system named after two scholars, Aarne and Thompson. Cinderella's variations are so abundant that the tale received its own category-folktale type 510, related stories of persecuted heroines. Here are notes on some of the specific variations from the Cinderella Bibliography, a link from the EDSITEment-reviewed website The History of Education and Childhood.

> Types most frequently in Cinderella stories are 510: *Cinderella and Cap o' Rushes*, which includes such functions as the persecuted heroine, magic help, meeting the prince, overstaying at the ball, proof of identity such as the slipper test, a ring, or unique abilities such as that of plucking the gold apple, marriage to the prince, and the value of salt. 510A: Cinderella, the stepsisters, the missing mother who helps by means of animals. 510B: The Dress of Gold, of Silver, and of the Stars, where the father would marry his daughter; three fold visit to the church, identifying footwear.

- Reader's Theater, used to dramatize texts of many kinds, is a staged reading with a minimum of the trappings of theater. Scripts are used during the performance; familiarity with the script rather than memorization is all that is required. Costumes are not used. Movement is minimal or non-existent. Roles are assigned, including one or more narrators. Narration, especially useful with texts not written for the theater, bridges gaps in the dialogue.

  Because students generally enjoy such low-pressure performance, Reader's Theater stimulates interest in the text under consideration. Here, performance is suggested to enhance understanding and to emphasize the changes in character from the familiar Cinderella.

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- No Cinderella stories, except the Perrault version, are repeated in either of the companion EDSITEment lessons, Cinderella Folk Tales: Variations in Character or Cinderella Folk Tales: Variations in Plot and Setting. Any of the stories could be used in either lesson; feel free to interchange them as desired.

Suggested Activities

1. The Cinderella We Know and Love: Familiar Plot Elements

2. What Makes a Cinderella Story? Part I

3. What Makes a Cinderella Story? Part II

4. Even More Cinderellas

5. A Cinderella of Your Own

Extending the Lesson

1. The Cinderella We Know and Love: Familiar Plot Elements

Begin by showing the class the image Cinderella Fitting the Slipper, a Cinderella illustration from Cinderella Bibliography, a link from the EDSITEment resource The History of Education and Childhood. Ask students if they can identify the story from the picture. Most will know immediately. How is it that virtually everyone can identify that this illustration is from Cinderella? What's happening at this point in the plot of the story? (Define the term "plot" for students, if necessary.) Again, everyone probably knows.

What plot elements from the Cinderella tale with which they are familiar can students list? Brainstorm as a class and write down what students say. Do they recall where the plot elements they've listed come from? For them, perhaps the Disney animated feature or read-alouds from earlier grades.

Read aloud to the class the text-only Perrault version of the Cinderella tale on Folklore and Mythology, a link from the EDSITEment resource Learner.org, or, even better, any of the many illustrated print versions, one of which you probably have in your school library. While you are there, check in your library for other variants used in this lesson. The Perrault version is the source of the most familiar Cinderella tale.

Which plot elements that the students mentioned were in this version? Which were not?

Using some of the input from the class, adapt the chart "Plot and Setting Elements in the Familiar Cinderella Story," on page 1 of the PDF file (see Preparing to Teach This Lesson, above, for download instructions), for your use in the next activity.

2. What Makes a Cinderella Story? Part I

For this activity, students will read stories that experts have categorized as Cinderella variants. The goal is to help students see that a plot element can seem quite different yet accomplish the same purpose in the narrative. In the Mi'kmaq (Native American) Cinderella tale, below, the heroine's ability to see the mighty hunter replaces the familiar identity test of the slipper while accomplishing the goal of allowing the heroine to be recognized.

Using the Native American Cinderella story the Mi'kmaq Cinderella, available through a link from the EDSITEment-reviewed website Native Web, model for the class the process students will later complete with other Cinderella stories. Before you share the story, remind students of the plot elements of the familiar Cinderella, listed in Activity 1, above, and now featured on the chart "Plot and Setting Elements in the

Familiar Cinderella Story." Ask students to predict how plot or setting elements in the familiar Cinderella tale might change in a Native American (Eastern Woodlands) setting.

Read aloud the Mi'kmaq Cinderella (during your usual read-aloud time, if desired). Using your adapted version of the "Plot and Setting Elements in the Familiar Cinderella Story" chart, help students identify the plot and setting variations in the Mi'kmaq Cinderella. What essential elements of the plot (such as a test of identity) are accomplished, even if in a quite different way?

3. What Makes a Cinderella Story? Part II

Model the analysis process once more by presenting to the class another Cinderella variation, this time with student volunteers participating in Reader's Theater. The Baba Yaga (Russia, 3 pages, from Aleksandr Afanasyev) would be a good story to use for this purpose since it features dialogue prominently. Consider using your read-aloud time for this activity as well.

Assign roles--including one or more narrators—and lead a reading. Using the chart "Plot and Setting Elements in the Familiar Cinderella Story," help students identify the plot and setting variations in the The Baba Yaga Cinderella. What essential elements of the Cinderella plot are accomplished, even if in a quite different way?

4. Even More Cinderellas

Next, students should be ready to analyze Cinderella tales on their own in small groups. As you prepare to make assignments, let students know that some of these stories are closer to the original than others. Point out to students the different countries of origin for these variants. (Time permitting, you can encourage interested students to do research on a country, as described in the fourth bullet point under Extending the Lesson, below, *though that is not the focus of this lesson*.) Tell the class briefly about the many variations of this tale around the world, as described above in Preparing to Teach This Lesson.

Choose as few or as many of the following stories for group assignment as you need to suit your class. In addition, if desired, secure illustrated versions of these and/or other Cinderella variants from the library:

- From 19th Century German Stories, a link from the EDSITEment resource Internet Public Library:
  - Aschenputtel (Germany, 7 pages, from the Grimm Brothers with illustrations)
- From Folklore and Mythology: Electronic Texts, a link from the EDSITEment-reviewed website Learner.org:
  - Fair, Brown, and Trembling (Ireland, 7 pages, from Jeremiah Curtin)
  - The Wicked Stepmother (India, 2 pages)
- From West Chester University LIT 395 and ENG 592, a link from the EDSITEment resource Learner.org:
  - Cap O' Rushes (England, 4 pages)
- From Tales of Wonder, a link from the EDSITEment-reviewed website Internet Public Library:
  - The Princess and the Golden Shoes (Scotland, 4 pages)
  - Tattercoats (England, 3 pages)

Each group should use the chart "Plot and Setting Elements in the Familiar Cinderella Story" as an aid to finding comparative plot elements.

Once the analysis is complete, allow groups to perform their tales for the class—using Reader's Theater or some other technique—during your usual read-aloud time. For a brief discussion of Reader's Theater, see Preparing to Teach This Lesson, above.

5. A Cinderella of Your Own

Now students are ready to create their own "culturally specific" Cinderella tales. While keeping in mind the essential plot elements, students should write a tale starting with a new setting, one with which they are very familiar. For example, a student might create a skateboarding Cinderella, a hip-hop Cinderella, a high-fashion Cinderella, a science-fiction Cinderella, and so on. Students should attend to the ways the plot must change along with the setting. Illustrations are encouraged, as they are a tradition with fairy tales!

This activity could be assigned as homework, with students writing their own Cinderella tales. The writing could start in class, with an expectation that the assignment would be completed within a week in a final draft form. Students should turn in a rough draft with their final version.

Encourage students to share their stories, either through read-alouds, performance, or distributing printed copies in a special Cinderella version of a class literary magazine. If desired, use the chart "Plot and Setting Elements in the Familiar Cinderella Story" once again for analysis of one or more student-created stories.

Extending the Lesson

- Students can search for other Cinderella tales through links from the EDSITEment resource Internet Public Library. An extensive database may be found at Cinderella: Variations and Multicultural Versions on the Cinderella Project, and an annotated bibliography of current Cinderella picture books is available from the American Library Association.
- Students can explore other fairy tales and their variants, starting with projects about Little Red Riding Hood and Jack and the Beanstalk, extensions of the Cinderella Project, available through The KidReach Reading Center, a link from the EDSITEment-reviewed website Internet Public Library.
- Citing concerns about alcohol use, an illustrated edition of "Little Red Riding Hood" was banned in two California school districts in 1989 because it depicted our heroine taking food and wine to her grandmother. Such banning occurs with surprising frequency. Debates over the appropriateness of fairy tales-for a variety of reasons-are nothing new. The EDSITEment resource The History of Education and Childhood features Dr. Karl Oppel's 1903 essay, Should children be told fairy tales?, which might interest (and even infuriate) some students. Here are a few excerpts:

  > ...are they recommendable for youth? I know, that I with my opinion will contradict thousands of fathers and educators, but yet I for myself answer this question with a very decided *No*. Many fairy tales fill the imagination with horrible images, with terrifying figures and by this they lay the foundation of scare and fear... Is it a wonder, if the child does not want to stay alone in the dark? ...I am of the opinion, that one should *never* tell children any extranatural (or, as many would have it) supernatural thing, no miracle stories, no fairy tales, nothing of fairies and ghosts; most of all one should not think, that a child, when told it is just a *fairy tale*, would not believe it for that reason. Far from it. Little children believe everything, because they do not think yet, and it does not matter much, whether one says with it: "It's true," or "It's *not* true".

  Discuss Dr. Oppel's opinions in class. Do students agree or disagree? Why?
- Students can complete research on any of the countries represented by Cinderella variations in this lesson. Our World, available on the EDSITEment-reviewed website Internet Public Library, is a good place to start online research on countries. Can students make connections between the information they find about a country's culture and that country's particular version of the Cinderella story?
- Interested students can read The Annotated Cinderella, an annotated copy of the Perrault version of the tale, available via a link from EDSITEment resource Learner.org, which explains many of the characteristic elements of the story. (NOTE: This page loads very slowly.)
- Students can locate online versions of Cinderella stories in their original language, including the Norwegian original of Katie Woodencloak—Kari Trestakk—available via a link from the EDSITEment-reviewed website Learner.org, and the German original of Aschenputtel, available through the EDSITEment resource Internet Public Library.

Selected EDSITEment Websites

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- The History of Education and Childhood [http://www.socsci.kun.nl/ped/whp/histeduc/index.html]
  - Dr. Karl Oppel 's argument against fairy tales [http://www.socsci.kun.nl/ped/whp/histeduc/disc01.html]
  - Camelot Project [http://www.lib.rochester.edu:80/camelot/CPHOME.stm]
  - Cap O'Rushes [http://www.lib.rochester.edu:80/camelot/cinder/images/JACOBS1.htm}
  - Cinderella Bibliography [http://www.lib.rochester.edu:80/camelot/cinder/cinintr.htm]
  - Fair Brown and Trembling [http://www.lib.rochester.edu:80/camelot/cinder/images/JACOBS4.htm]
  - Putting the Slipper on Her Foot [http://www.lib.rochester.edu:80/camelot/cinder/images/Clarke1.htm]
- The Internet Public Library [http://www.ipl.org]
  - Our World [http://www.ipl.org/kidspace/browse/owd0000]
  - 19th Century German Stories [http://www.fln.vcu.edu/menu.html]
  - American Library Association [http://www.ala.org/]
  - Multi-Cultural Cinderella Stories [http://www.ala.org/BookLinks/v09/cinderella.html]
  - Tattercoats [http://www.darsie.net/talesofwonder/ttc.html]
  - The Princess and the Golden Shoes [http://www.darsie.net/talesofwonder/ptgs.html]
  - The KidReach Reading Center [http://www.westga.edu/%7Ekidreach/index.html]
  - Cinderella Project: Home Page [http://www-dept.usm.edu/%7eengdept/cinderella/cinderella.html] de Grummond Children's Literature Research Collection, University of Southern Mississippi, editor, Michael N. Salda
  - Perrault's Histories .... London: J. Pote & R. Montagu, 1729 [http://www-dept.usm.edu/%7eengdept/cinderella/cind5.html]
  - David Delamare's retelling of Cinderella, published in 1993 by Green Tiger Press, Simon & Schuster [http://www-dept.usm.edu/~engdept/cinderella/delamare/thumbs.html]
  - de Grummond Children's Literature Research Collection Cinderella: Variations and Multicultural Versions [http://avatar.lib.usm.edu/~degrum/html/collectionhl/ch-cinderelladatabase.shtml]
- Learner.org [http://www.learner.org/]
  - Cinderella: A Cross-Textual Study [http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/conversations/conversation/objectifying/extension.html]
  - The Annotated Cinderella [http://members.aol.com/surlalune/frytales/cinderel/index.htm]
  - West Chester University LIT 395 and ENG 592 [http://courses.wcupa.edu/johnson/]
  - Cap O'Rushes [http://courses.wcupa.edu/johnson/cap1.htm]
  - The Golden Slipper (Russian) [http://courses.wcupa.edu/johnson/golden.html]
  - Tattercoats [http://courses.wcupa.edu/johnson/tatt1.htm]
  - Folklore and Mythology: Electronic Texts [http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html]

- Cinderella [http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0510a.html]
- The Wicked Stepmother [http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0510a.html#india]
- The Story of Tam and Cam [http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/tam.html]
- The Green Knight [http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/greenknight.html]
- Katie Woodencloak [http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0510a.html#woodencloak]
- Pepelyouga [http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0510a.html#Serbia]
- Rashin-Coatie [http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0510a.html#rashincoatie]

- Native Web [http://www.nativeweb.org/]
  - Mi'kmaq Cinderella [http://www.kstrom.net/isk/stories/cinder3.html]

Other Information

Standards Alignment

1. ACTFL-4.2

   Demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and one's own more

2. NAES-Theater(K-4) 2

   Acting by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations

3. NAES-Theater(K-4) 4

   Directing by planning classroom dramatizations

4. NAES-Theater(K-4) 5

   Researching by finding information to support classroom dramatizations

5. NCTE/IRA-1

   Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works. more

6. NCTE/IRA-11

   Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

7. NCTE/IRA-3

   Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes. more

8. NCTE/IRA-6

Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts. more

Name _____ Date _____

Plot and Setting Elements in the Familiar Cinderella Story

Group Members:

	Yes/ No	If yes, what actually happens in your story? If no, what happens in your story instead?
Heroine is persecuted.		
Stepmother is cruel.		
Stepsisters are mean.		
Weak father doesn't know about or is unable to stop bad treatment of heroine.		
Fairy godmother gives magical help.		
Objects and/or animals help magically.		
Heroine meets the prince.		
Prince immediately taken with the heroine's beauty.		
The heroine forgets about the time limit on the magic.		
Heroine's identity is tested.		
Prince marries the heroine.		
Cruel people change and become kind.		
Some of the action takes place in a castle.		
Some of the action takes place in a carriage.		
Some of the action takes place in an attic above a house.		

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Plot and Setting Elements in the Familiar Cinderella Story

http://edsitement.neh.gov

Student Name _____ Date _____

Group Members:	Yes/No	If yes, what actually happens in your story? If no, what happens in your story instead?
Heroine is persecuted.		
Stepmother is cruel.		
Stepsisters are mean.		
Weak father doesn't know about or is unable to stop bad treatment of heroine.		
Fairy godmother gives magical help.		
Objects and/or animals help magically.		
Heroine meets the prince.		
Prince immediately taken with the heroine's beauty.		
The heroine forgets about the time limit on the magic.		
Heroine's identity is tested.		
Prince marries the heroine.		
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